

## CLAIMS

1 A system for searching an information directory, said system comprising:  
2 an organizer configured to receive search requests, said organizer comprising:  
3 an information directory having at least two entries;  
4 wherein the information directory is organized into at least two taxonomies;  
5 wherein each of the at least two taxonomies is associated with at least two categories;  
6 wherein the entries correspond to at least one of the at least two taxonomies and also  
7 correspond to at least one of the at least two categories; and  
8 a search engine in communication with the information directory,  
9 wherein said search engine is configured to search based on the at least two taxonomies  
10 and based on the at least two categories,  
11 wherein the search engine returns, in response to a search request identifying at least a  
12 first taxonomy of the at least two taxonomies, a list of the categories associated with the at least  
13 first identified taxonomy, along with the number of entries associated with each of the categories  
14 associated with the at least first identified taxonomy.

1 2. The system according to Claim 1, wherein the returned list of categories associated  
2 with the first taxonomy, along with the number of entries associated with each of the categories  
3 associated with the identified taxonomy can be further searched with regard to a second of the at  
4 least two taxonomies, whereby the search engine returns, in response to a search request  
5 identifying the second taxonomy of the at least two taxonomies, a list of the categories associated  
6 with both identified taxonomies, along with the number of entries associated with each of the  
7 categories associated with the second taxonomy.

1           3.     The system according to Claim 1, wherein the search engine, having returned, in  
2     response to a search request identifying a first taxonomy of the at least two taxonomies, a list of  
3     the categories associated with the identified taxonomy, along with the number of entries  
4     associated with each of the categories associated with the identified taxonomy, will provide only  
5     those categories with a non-zero number of entries associated with the identified taxonomy and  
6     will further return sub-categories both associated with the category and having a non-zero number  
7     of entries associated with the sub-category.

1           4.     The system according to Claim 3, wherein the search engine, having further  
2     returned sub-categories both associated with the category and having a non-zero number of  
3     entries associated with the sub-category, will, in response to a search request identifying a second  
4     taxonomy of the at least two taxonomies, provide a list of the categories with a non-zero number  
5     of entries associated with the second identified taxonomy, along with the number of entries  
6     associated with each of the categories associated with the second identified taxonomy.

1           5.     The system according to Claim 1, wherein the search engine, having returned, in  
2     response to a search request identifying a first taxonomy of the at least two taxonomies, a list of  
3     the categories associated with the identified taxonomy, along with the number of entries  
4     associated with each of the categories associated with the identified taxonomy, will, in response  
5     to a string query, provide those entries which both contain the string and are associated with the  
6     identified taxonomy.

1           6.     The system according to Claim 5, wherein the string is one member of the group  
2     consisting of text, image, and graphic.

1           7.     The system according to Claim 1, wherein the system comprises a network of  
2     computers.

1 8. The system according to Claim 1, wherein the system comprises a single  
2 computer.

1 9. The system according to Claim 1, wherein the system further comprises a cache  
2 which stores the returned results of the search engine for rapid retrieval.

1 10. The system for searching an information directory according to Claim 1, wherein  
2 at least one taxonomy of the at least two taxonomies is selected from the group consisting of  
3 products, services, location, industry, business type, SIC code, NAICS code, Harmonized Code,  
4 UNSPC Standard, company information, professional information, and degrees attained.

1 11. The system for searching an information directory according to Claim 1, wherein,  
2 in response to a search request identifying one member selected from the group consisting of a  
3 taxonomy, a category, and a sub-category, the search engine additionally returns an advertising  
4 entry.

1 12. The system for searching an information directory according to Claim 17, wherein  
2 the advertising entry is at least one member selected from the group consisting of a banner  
3 advertisement and a search-visible storefront.

1 13. A system for searching an information directory, said system comprising:  
2 means for networking a plurality of computers; and  
3 means for organizing executing in said computer network and configured to receive search  
4 requests from any one of said plurality of computers, said means for organizing comprising:  
5 an information directory having at least two entries;  
6 wherein the information directory is organized into at least two taxonomies;  
7 wherein each of the at least two taxonomies is associated with at least two categories;

8 wherein the entries correspond to at least one of the at least two taxonomies and also  
9 correspond to at least one of the at least two categories; and

10 means for searching in communication with the information directory,

11 wherein said means for searching is configured to search based on the at least two  
12 taxonomies and based on the at least two categories,

13 wherein the means for searching returns, in response to a search request identifying one of  
14 the at least two taxonomies, a list of the categories associated with the identified taxonomy, along  
15 with the number of entries associated with each of the categories associated with the identified  
16 taxonomy.

1 14. The system according to Claim 13, wherein the returned list of categories  
2 associated with the first taxonomy, along with the number of entries associated with each of the  
3 categories associated with the identified taxonomy can be further searched with regard to a  
4 second of the at least two taxonomies, whereby the means for searching returns, in response to a  
5 search request identifying the second taxonomy of the at least two taxonomies, a list of the  
6 categories associated with both identified taxonomies, along with the number of entries associated  
7 with each of the categories associated with the second taxonomy.

1 15. The system for searching an information directory according to Claim 13, wherein  
2 the means for searching, having returned, in response to a search request identifying a first  
3 taxonomy of the at least two taxonomies, a list of the categories associated with the identified  
4 taxonomy, along with the number of entries associated with each of the categories associated with  
5 the identified taxonomy, will provide only those categories with a non-zero number of entries  
6 associated with the identified taxonomy and will further provide sub-categories associated with  
7 the category and having a non-zero number of entries associated with the sub-category.

1           16.    The system for searching an information directory according to Claim 15, wherein  
2   the means for searching, having further returned sub-categories both associated with the category  
3   and having a non-zero number of entries associated with the sub-category, will, in response to a  
4   search request identifying a second taxonomy of the at least two taxonomies, provide a list of the  
5   categories with a non-zero number of entries associated with the second identified taxonomy,  
6   along with the number of entries associated with each of the categories associated with the second  
7   identified taxonomy.

1           17.    The system for searching an information directory according to Claim 15, wherein  
2   the means for searching, having returned, in response to a search request identifying a first  
3   taxonomy of the at least two taxonomies, a list of the categories associated with the identified  
4   taxonomy, along with the number of entries associated with each of the categories associated with  
5   the identified taxonomy, will, in response to a string query, provide those entries which both  
6   contain the string and are associated with the identified taxonomy.

1           18.    The system for searching an information directory according to Claim 17, wherein  
2   the string is one member of the group consisting of text, image, and graphic.

1           19.    The system for searching an information directory according to Claim 15, wherein  
2   the system comprises a network of computers.

1           20.    The system for searching an information directory according to Claim 15, wherein  
2   the system comprises a single computer.

1           21.    The system for searching an information directory according to Claim 15, wherein  
2   the system further comprises a cache which stores the returned results of the means for searching  
3   for rapid retrieval.

1           22.    The system for searching an information directory according to Claim 15, wherein  
2   at least one taxonomy of the at least two taxonomies is selected from the group consisting of  
3   products, services, location, industry, business type, SIC code, NAICS code, Harmonized Code,  
4   UNSPC Standard, company information, professional information, and degrees attained.

1           23.    The system for searching an information directory according to Claim 15, wherein,  
2   in response to a search request identifying one member selected from the group consisting of a  
3   taxonomy, a category, and a sub-category, the means for searching additionally returns an  
4   advertising entry.

1           24.    The system for searching an information directory according to Claim 23, wherein  
2   the advertising entry is at least one member selected from the group consisting of a banner  
3   advertisement and a search-visible storefront.

1           25.    A method for searching an information directory, said method comprising:  
2           communicating a search request to a search engine, the search engine being in  
3           communication with an information directory;  
4           wherein the information directory has at least two entries;  
5           wherein the information directory is organized into at least two taxonomies;  
6           wherein each of the at least two taxonomies is associated with at least two categories;  
7           wherein the at least two entries correspond to at least one of the at least two taxonomies  
8           and also correspond to at least one of the at least two categories;  
9           querying of the information directory by the search engine based on the communicated  
10          search request;  
11          wherein the communicated search request identifies at least one of the at least two  
12          taxonomies;

13 returning of a list of the categories associated with the at least one identified taxonomy,  
14 along with the number of entries associated with each of the categories associated with the at least  
15 one identified taxonomy as a response to the querying of the information directory.

1 26. The method for searching an information directory according to Claim 25, wherein  
2 the method further comprises

3 returning, in response to a search request identifying a second taxonomy of the at least two  
4 taxonomies, a list of the categories associated with both identified taxonomies, along with the  
5 number of entries associated with each of the categories associated with the second taxonomy.

1 27. The method for searching an information directory according to Claim 25, wherein  
2 the method further comprises

3 returning a list of only those categories with a non-zero number of entries associated with  
4 the identified taxonomy and further returning at least one sub-category associated with the  
5 category and having a non-zero number of entries associated with the sub-category.

1 28. The method for searching an information directory according to Claim 27, wherein  
2 the method further comprises

3 having further returned sub-categories both associated with the category and having a non-  
4 zero number of entries associated with the sub-category, providing, in response to a search  
5 request identifying a second taxonomy of the at least two taxonomies, provide a list of the  
6 categories with a non-zero number of entries associated with the second identified taxonomy,  
7 along with the number of entries associated with each of the categories associated with the second  
8 identified taxonomy.

1 29. The method for searching an information directory according to Claim 25, wherein  
2 the method further comprises

3        returning, in response to a string query, provide those entries which both contain the string  
4        and are associated with the identified taxonomy.

1        30.     The method for searching an information directory according to Claim 29, wherein  
2        the string is one member of the group consisting of text, image, and graphic.

1        31.     The method for searching an information directory according to Claim 25, wherein  
2        the system comprises a network of computers.

1        32.     The method for searching an information directory according to Claim 25, wherein  
2        the system comprises a single computer.

1        33.     The method for searching an information directory according to Claim 25, wherein  
2        the system further comprises a cache which stores the returned results of the means for searching  
3        for rapid retrieval.

1        34.     The method for searching an information directory according to Claim 25, wherein  
2        at least one taxonomy of the at least two taxonomies is selected from the group consisting of  
3        products, services, location, industry, business type, SIC code, NAICS code, Harmonized Code,  
4        UNSPC Standard, company information, professional information, and degrees attained.

1        35.     The method for searching an information directory according to Claim 25, wherein  
2        the method further comprises

3        returning by the search engine additionally, in response to a search request identifying one  
4        member selected from the group consisting of a taxonomy, a category, and a sub-category, an  
5        advertising entry.

1        36.     The method for searching an information directory according to Claim 35, wherein  
2        the advertising entry is at least one member selected from the group consisting of a banner  
3        advertisement and a search-visible storefront.



1        37. An article of manufacture comprising:  
2        a computer usable medium having computer program code means embodied thereon for  
3        searching an information directory, the computer readable program code means in said article of  
4        manufacture comprising:  
5        computer readable program code means for communicating a search request to a search  
6        engine, the search engine being in communication with an information directory;  
7        wherein the information directory has at least two entries;  
8        wherein the information directory is organized into at least two taxonomies;  
9        wherein each of the at least two taxonomies is associated with at least two categories;  
10       wherein the at least two entries correspond to at least one of the at least two taxonomies  
11       and also correspond to at least one of the at least two categories;  
12       computer readable program code means for querying of the information directory by the  
13       search engine based on the communicated search request;  
14       wherein a communicated search request identifies at least one of the at least two  
15       taxonomies; and  
16       computer readable program code means for returning of a list of the categories associated  
17       with the at least one identified taxonomy, along with the number of entries associated with each  
18       of the categories associated with the at least one identified taxonomy as a response to the  
19       querying of the information directory.

1        38. The article of manufacture according to Claim 37, wherein the returned list of  
2        categories associated with the first taxonomy, along with the number of entries associated with  
3        each of the categories associated with the identified taxonomy can be further searched with regard  
4        to a second of the at least two taxonomies, whereby the computer readable program code means

5 for querying of the information directory by the search engine returns, in response to a search  
6 request identifying the second taxonomy of the at least two taxonomies, a list of the categories  
7 associated with both identified taxonomies, along with the number of entries associated with each  
8 of the categories associated with the second taxonomy.

1 39. The article of manufacture according to Claim 37, wherein the computer readable  
2 program code means for querying of the information directory by the search engine, having  
3 returned, in response to a search request identifying a first taxonomy of the at least two  
4 taxonomies, a list of the categories associated with the identified taxonomy, along with the  
5 number of entries associated with each of the categories associated with the identified taxonomy,  
6 will provide only those categories with a non-zero number of entries associated with the identified  
7 taxonomy and will further provide sub-categories associated with the category and having a non-  
8 zero number of entries associated with the sub-category.

1 40. The article of manufacture according to Claim 39, wherein the computer readable  
2 program code means for querying of the information directory by the search engine, having  
3 further returned sub-categories both associated with the category and having a non-zero number  
4 of entries associated with the sub-category, will, in response to a search request identifying a  
5 second taxonomy of the at least two taxonomies, provide a list of the categories with a non-zero  
6 number of entries associated with the second identified taxonomy, along with the number of  
7 entries associated with each of the categories associated with the second identified taxonomy.

1 41. The article of manufacture according to Claim 37, wherein the means for  
2 searching, having returned, in response to a search request identifying a first taxonomy of the at  
3 least two taxonomies, a list of the categories associated with the identified taxonomy, along with  
4 the number of entries associated with each of the categories associated with the identified

5 taxonomy, will, in response to a string query, provide those entries which both contain the string  
6 and are associated with the identified taxonomy.

1 42. The article of manufacture according to Claim 41, wherein the string is one  
2 member of the group consisting of text, image, and graphic.

1 43. The article of manufacture according to Claim 37, wherein at least one taxonomy  
2 of the at least two taxonomies is selected from the group consisting of products, services,  
3 location, industry, business type, SIC code, NAICS code, Harmonized Code, UNSPC Standard,  
4 company information, professional information, and degrees attained.

1 44. The article of manufacture according to Claim 37, wherein, in response to a search  
2 request identifying one member selected from the group consisting of a taxonomy, a category,  
3 and a sub-category, the search engine additionally returns an advertising entry.

1 45. The article of manufacture according to Claim 44, wherein the advertising entry is  
2 at least one member selected from the group consisting of a banner advertisement and a search-  
3 visible storefront.